

CLAIMS AMENDMENTS:

Please cancel Claims 14 and 71, and amend Claims 11, 13, 15, 41, 57, 59, and 68 as follows:

1.-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) An image processing method in a ~~an~~ image processing system that includes an image processing apparatus which combines material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image and an image storage apparatus, said method comprising the steps of:

holding first information including ~~a~~ characteristic quantity color information of each of a plurality of material images by the image processing apparatus, the first information corresponds to each of the plurality of material images and has an amount of information less than that of each of the plurality of material images;

determining selected material images and their positions ~~according to an original image and the first information~~ such that the selected material images have color information similar to the color information of respective blocks divided from the original image by the image processing apparatus;

storing the plurality of material images in the image storage apparatus; and

outputting the selected material images determined in said determining step out of the plurality of material images stored in the storage apparatus according to the position determined in said determining step.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein said determining step includes determining the selected material images which correspond respectively to each block created by dividing the original image for positioning of the selected material images, and said outputting step includes forming a mosaic image by combining the selected material images which correspond respectively to each block of the original image.

13. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the first color information is obtained from a scale-down image of each of the plurality of material images.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for selecting a material image from a plurality of material images stored in ~~a~~ an image storage apparatus and then combining the selected material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image, according to a characteristic of an original image, said method comprising the steps of:

holding information including ~~a~~ characteristic color information of each of the plurality of material images;

determining selected material images ~~according to the original image and the information such that the selected material images have color information similar to the~~ color information of respective blocks divided from the original image; and

outputting information indicating the selected material images determined in said determining step to the image storage apparatus.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 15, wherein said output step includes combining the selected material images to form a mosaic image.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 15, further comprising a step of receiving information including a characteristic of each of the plurality of material images from the image storage-apparatus.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 15, wherein the plurality of material images are divided into a plurality of groups and held, and said method further comprises a step of specifying any of the plurality of groups.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 15, further comprising a step of receiving the mosaic image formed in the image storage apparatus.

20.- 40. (Cancelled)

41. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus for selecting material images from a plurality of material images stored in an image storage apparatus and then combining the selected material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of

an original image, according to a characteristic of an original image, said apparatus comprising:

holding means for holding information including ~~a~~ characteristic color information of each of the plurality of material images;

determination means for determining selected material images according to the original image and the information such that the selected material images have color information similar to the color information of respective blocks divided from the original image; and

output means for outputting information indicating the selected material images determined by said determination means to the storage apparatus.

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 41, wherein said output means combines the selected material images to form a mosaic image.

43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 41, further comprising means for receiving information including a characteristic of each of the plurality of material images from the image storage apparatus.

44. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 41, wherein the plurality of material images are divided into a plurality of groups and held and said apparatus further comprising means for specifying any of the plurality of groups.

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 41, further comprising means for receiving the mosaic image formed in the storage apparatus.

46. - 56. (Cancelled)

57. (Currently Amended) An image processing system comprising an image processing apparatus which combines material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image and an image storage apparatus, said image processing apparatus comprising:

means for holding first information including ~~a characteristic quantity~~ color information of each of a plurality of material images, wherein the first information corresponds to each of the plurality of material images and has an amount of information less than that of each of the plurality of material images; and

determination means for determining selected material images and their positions ~~according to an original image and the first information such that the selected material images have color information similar to the color information of respective blocks divided from the original image;~~ and

said image storage apparatus comprising:

means for storing the plurality of material images; and

means for outputting the selected material images determined by said determination means out of the plurality of material images stored in said image storage apparatus according to the position determined by said determination means.

58. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein said determination means determines the selected material images each of which correspond to each block created by dividing the original image for positioning of the material image, and said output means forms a mosaic image by combining the selected material images which correspond respectively to each block of the original image.

59. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim 57, wherein the first color information corresponding to the material images is obtained from a plurality of scale-down image or a plurality of image characteristic parameters corresponding to the plurality of material image.

60. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein said image processing apparatus further comprises receiving means for receiving the first information corresponding to the plurality of material images from said image storage apparatus.

61. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein said receiving means receives the first information corresponding to the material images during activation of said image processing system.

62. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 58, wherein said storage means stores the plurality of material images by dividing the plurality of material images into a plurality of groups, and said determination means determines the

selected material images and their positions according to the first information corresponding to a plurality of material images contained in a selected group.

63. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 58, wherein said receiving means further receives a mosaic image generated by said output means.

64. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 58, wherein said image processing apparatus receives the selected material images determined by said determination means from said image storage means by said receiving means and arranges the selected material images received by said receiving means according to the positions determined by said determination means to form a mosaic image.

65. (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 57, wherein a plurality of said image processing means are provided and said image storage means can be shared between said plurality of image processing means.

66. and 67. (Cancelled)

68. (Currently Amended) A computer program embodied in a computer-readable storage medium, a computer executing said program to perform an image processing method for selecting a material image from a plurality of material images stored in a an image storage apparatus and then combining the selected material images to

generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image, according to a characteristic of an original image, said program comprising the procedure codes of:

holding information including ~~a~~characteristic color information of each of the plurality of material images;

determining selected material ~~image~~ images according to the original image and the information such that the selected material images have color information similar to the color information of respective blocks divided from the original image; and

outputting information indicating the selected material images determined in the determining step to the image storage apparatus.

69. and 76. (Cancelled)